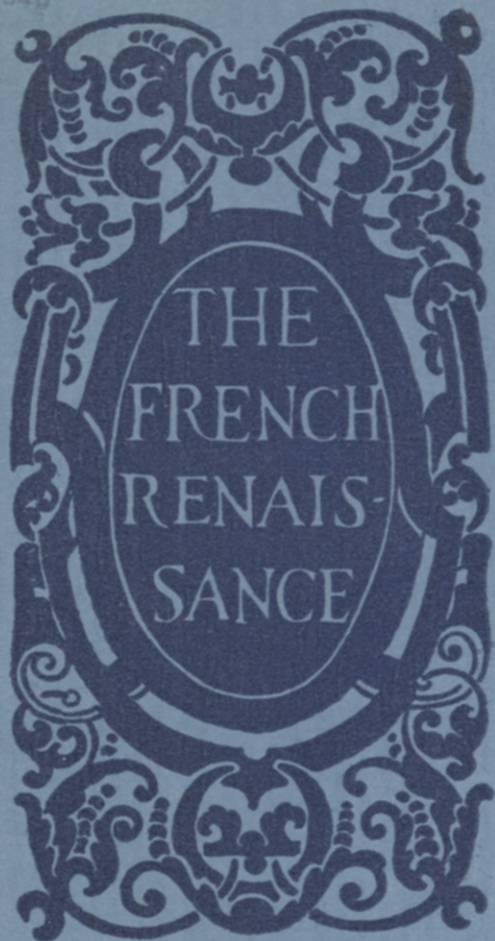
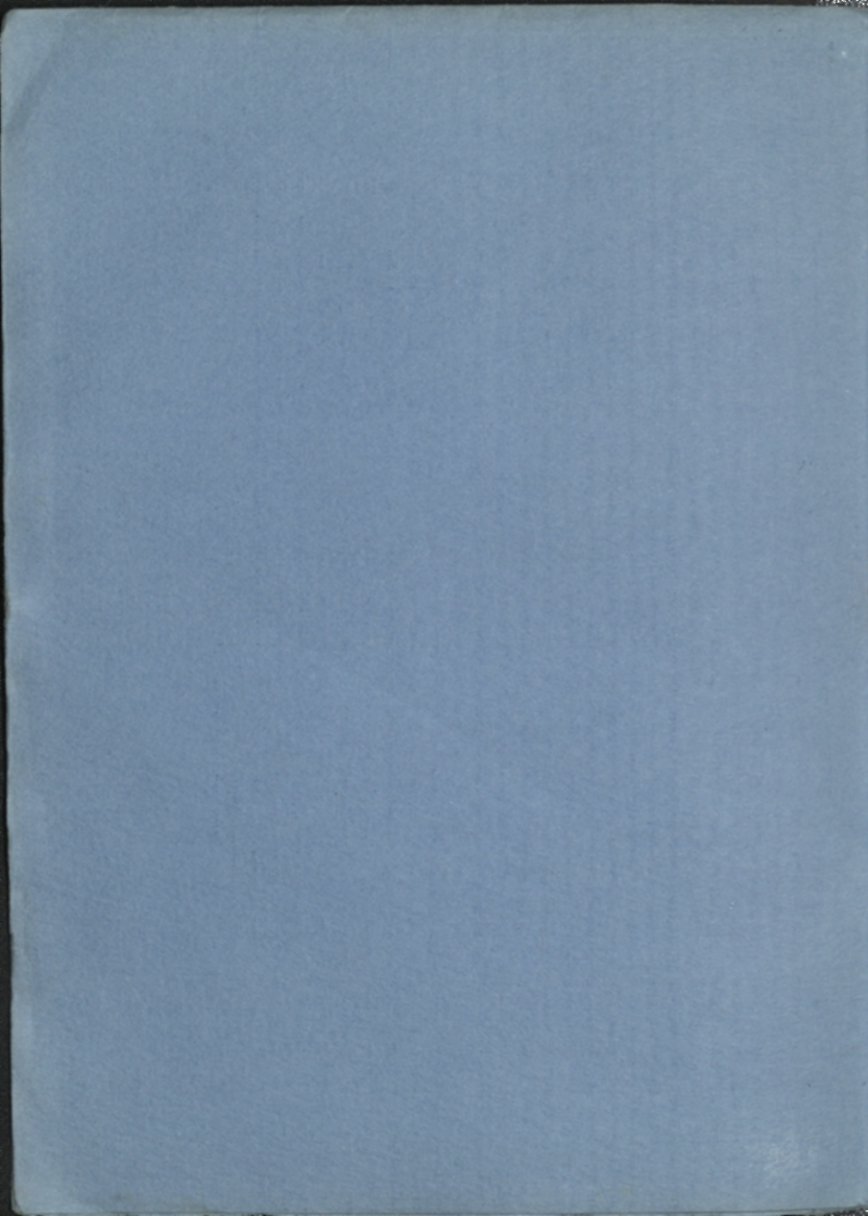


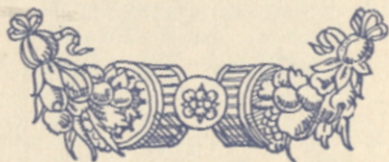
JAN 31 1940



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THE FRENCH RENAISSANCE



Decorative Fabrics of Distinction

STROHEIM & ROMANN

730 FIFTH AVENUE at 57th STREET
NEW YORK

CHICAGO
Heyworth Bldg.

BOSTON
Berkeley Bldg.

PHILADELPHIA
Integrity Trust Bldg.

LOS ANGELES
Chillis Block

SAN FRANCISCO
Heger Bldg.



The salamander of Francis I.



French or Italian silk design of the 16th century.

“**W**ITHOUT generals, without money, with the impromptu army of a moment’s whim,” Charles VIII of France undertook in 1494 an invasion of Italy, intending to enforce his claims to those Italian provinces which more than two centuries before had been deeded to Count Charles of Anjou, brother of Louis IX. Although the expedition itself was disastrous, the venturesome lords who were forced with their king to beat a hasty retreat across the Alps brought

back with them not only valuable material possessions but also vivid recollections of an amazing culture.

THE campaigns of Louis XII and Francis I further augmented and stimulated this interest in Italy, "that old enchantress with the fatal gift of beauty."

THE French Renaissance, which had its inception with the return of the expeditionary forces of Charles, continued to affirm itself throughout the sixteenth century. It was replaced between the years 1610 and 1614 by the more highly ornate Louis XIII style.

EIGHT kings occupied the throne of France during this period — Charles VIII, Louis XII, Francis I, Henry II, Francis II, Charles IX, Henry III and Henry IV. Two of these monarchs were not only endowed with colorful personalities, but they also surpassed the others in the brilliancy and the greatness of their achievements.

"IF Francis I was not a great king," it has been written, "he was at any rate a great man." He possessed a cultivated intellect, and his patronage of letters and the arts have made him preeminently famous as the "king of the French Renaissance."

IT was the religious tolerance of Henry IV which made his reign especially significant. The Edict of Nantes brought peace and security to a country which had been torn by civil wars for a long period of years. Because of it, the industries of France, and especially the art of silk weaving, were enormously strengthened.

THE other kings who ruled France during the Renaissance period appeal less to one's imagination. Charles VIII was a plain, slow, honest monarch who was unfortunately encouraged in his military aspirations. The foreign policies of Louis XII were likewise inadequate, but his rule at home was respectable.

THE reigns of Henry II (the second son of Francis I) and his three sons, Francis II, Charles IX and Henry III, were largely dominated by feminine influence. Catherine de' Medici, the Italian "shopkeeper's daughter," was at the mercy of the coldly beautiful Diane during the reign of her husband, Henry II, but she succeeded during her term of regency in grasping the power which had all but evaded her. Never understanding French customs, versed only in intrigue and deception, she was at first heartily disliked and later detested.

THE Renaissance movement in France manifested itself first of all in an immense building program. Kings and nobles seemed obsessed with the desire to house themselves in more pleasant and comfortable palaces. Everywhere along the banks of the Loire and its tributary streams, at Amboise, Chenonceaux, Chaumont, Blois and Chambord, these gracious residences sprang into existence.



16th century French velvet pattern.

OF the Italian artists famous for their craftsmanship, and there were many, who visited France during this period, the best known perhaps are Rosso, Benvenuto Cellini, Primaticcio, and Leonardo da Vinci. Each of these are names, which even to-day are synonymous with beauty.

THE abilities of Rosso were, according to Vasari, so fully appreciated in France "that the glory he there acquired might well have sufficed to quench the utmost thirst of fame, and to satisfy the most exacting ambition."

LEONARDO DA VINCI was a weak old man when he was persuaded to come to France by Francis I. The king often sought out his company, declaring that no mortal man possessed so great a knowledge of the fine arts and of philosophy. France is today richer because of the friendship which existed between this great artist and his royal patron, for it was Francis I who brought from the painter his famous Mona Lisa.

LITTLE by little, the French Renaissance movement assumed more distinctly national characteristics. The use of devices and badges appealed particularly to the French artists. The porcupine of Louis XII, the er-

mine and *cordeliere* of Anne of Brittany, and the salamander of Francis I are all familiar. So, too, are the initials of the kings and queens. Henry II employed a monogram in which his initials might be considered joined either to that of his queen, Catherine de' Medici, or of Diane of Poitiers. Crescents, bows and arrows and other emblems of the goddess of the chase, accompanied this monogram of Henry.

COINCIDENT with the immense building activity which occurred during the Renaissance, there existed an increased demand for all the furnishings and accessories with which to transform the new palaces into veritable "places of pleasure." Chief among these were the beautiful tissues, many of which were imported from Italy. Those which were woven in France were throughout the period of the Renaissance entirely Italian in inspiration, the masters in the French weaving centers being Italians.



*Design showing
Diane of
the emblems of
Poitiers.*

TOURS was one of the most important of the early French silk weaving centers. In 1546 a visitor from Venice described the silk industry there as being the best in France. During the previous year, a royal charter granted Tours the privilege of holding fairs twice yearly. The silks and cloth of gold and silver, which were there placed on sale, were "as good and fine as those of any foreign manufacture."

THE reign of Francis I marked the ascendancy of Lyons as a silk weaving center. Other manufacturing towns began to come there to provision themselves, and a monopoly of the sale of silk followed.

FRENCH Renaissance textiles are with difficulty distinguished from those of Italian manufacture. Both were ornamented with the same dignified, symmetrical design in which sprays, vases and bouquets of flowers played an important role. Often these were enclosed by leaf and floral scrollings, forming ogivals or medallions. The occasional introduction of a peculiarly French detail or a slight difference in technique is all that leads us to suspect a French origin.

TOWARDS the end of the sixteenth century, small powdered patterns began to gain favor, largely because of the less voluminous fashions in men's attire.

THE French silk style, subject to Italian influence throughout the period of the Renaissance, gradually began to assert its independence, and it was not long until the French textiles even eclipsed those of Italian manufacture in the beauty of their patterns and the perfection of their technique.



16th century silk pattern of French or Italian manufacture.



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